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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY DECREE EXTENDED

REF: (A) BANGKOK 6595 (B) BANGKOK 4697 (C) BANGKOK

4653 (D) BANGKOK 4596

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR SUSAN SUTTON. REASON: 1.4 (D)

1. (U) Summary: On October 18, the Cabinet agreed to extend the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations in the three southern border provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala for another three months. The move was expected. Opponents of the measures are criticizing the Decree as polarizing and counter-productive. However, in the wake of the recent gruesome murders of a monk and two young acolytes in Pattani by suspected separatists, general public support for an extension of the measures will continue. End summary.

EMERGENCY DECREE MEASURES EXTENDED

2. (U) At its October 18 Tuesday weekly meeting, the Cabinet agreed to extend the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations in the three southern border provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala for another three months. The effective period of the extension will be October 20, 2005 to January 20, 2006. Under the terms of the Decree's article 5, the Prime Minister is empowered to extend the declaration of emergency in specified areas for three months with Cabinet approval. The decree first came into effect on July 17 this year.

THAKSIN SAYS HE HAS NO CHOICE

3. (U) Critics have long maintained that the decree as ineffective and likely to exacerbate already strong southern Thai Muslim suspicions of the RTG's motives. In the face of initial criticism by human rights groups, the political opposition and media bodies, the government made haste to assure that the provisions of the bill would be applied sparingly and in only very specific locations. As noted in Ref. B, the RTG announced that it would not to apply parts of Articles 9 and 11 dealing with banning public assembly and the sale of news or other publications. Critics have pointed out that while the government has elected not to impose for now some measures, the fact that it retains the authority to apply all of the decree's provisions gives it great scope to commit civil rights abuses.

4. (U) Opponents of the extension declared that the emergency measures led many southern Thai Muslims to fear that the government was empowering its security officials to murder them with impunity in the name of battling the separatists. Following the Cabinet session, Prime Minister Thaksin, trying to justify provisions of the Decree, reportedly claimed that the US and Britain allow the detention of terrorist suspects for relatively long periods without charge. The Prime Minister also said that the current situation in the country's deep south gave his government no choice but to extend the measure.

5. (C) Comment: The decision by the cabinet to extend the emergency measures does not come as a surprise. The situation in the southern border region has not improved. Rather, several grisly incidents, the most recent being the killings of a Buddhist Monk and two young acolytes by suspected separatists, have hardened general Thai public attitudes even as they highlighted the governments inability to come to grips with the problem. For Thaksin, lifting the measures, no matter how questionable their effectiveness, would appear to be a retreat by his government.
BOYCE